

Change rooms and supervision



Government of South Australia

Department for Education and
Child Development



Change rooms and supervision swimming and aquatics context

An important and sometimes sensitive part of the school's responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of students participating in DECD Swimming and Aquatics is the supervision of Changing and Change rooms.

The following information is designed to provide some strategies for consideration by schools when determining how best to manage the changing of students and change rooms. It should be read in conjunction with the child protection and protective practices documents listed in the Appendix at the end of this paper.

Why is supervision of change rooms important?

- 1 To keep the students safe
- 2 to manage student behaviour towards each other
- 3 to manage student behaviour around other people using the change rooms
- 4 to manage student behaviour in terms of their appropriate use of the change room space and fixtures

What are some of the constraints when accessing change rooms?

- 1 Shared use of change rooms (students can be changing with members of the public)
- 2 No male / female staff to manage supervision for boys/girls
- 3 Differing parent expectations as to how changing should occur

What options might be available?

- 1 Is there a separate changing area(s) that could be accessed at the facility you are planning to use?
- 2 If not, can you negotiate to have the public not use the change rooms for the short period where your students are changing? (signs can be purchased – schools only no entry - and placed out at the times when students are changing and put away when finished.)
- 3 Can they come to the pool with their bathers already on so they only have to get out of their clothes? (this would reduce the need to use the change rooms to once after students have finished their lessons to change out their wet bathers)
- 4 Do you bus the students back to school to change with their bathers on? (some bus companies will not support this)

Supervision:

- 1 It is expected that students would be supervised when changing, especially when members of the public are present.

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- 2 Ideally two school leaders (at least one teacher) to position themselves where they can see their student group. Positioning adjacent to the entry point enables supervisors to monitor entry and exit of students and others.

Other issues:

- 1 Schools need to consider how their support teachers and parents manage student requests for help when changing (likely with younger students). Do you provide help and if so in what circumstances and who provides this help?
- 2 Do parents only support the changing of their own child?

Please ensure your child is dressed in clothing in which s/he is able to remove and fasten themselves. Assistance will be provided with shoes and socks.

Children will remove and put on their own underclothes but same-sex school staff can assist with outer clothing.

Parents are able to assist their own child to dress but will only assist other children with shoes and socks.

Informed consent:

It is important that parents given informed consent for their child's participation on offsite activities. This can include changing arrangements as it can be an issue where parents have quite differing views about what they are comfortable with.

Change room policy/procedures is an area where the School's Governing Council could be involved in developing and endorsing a school approach.

DECD Swimming & Aquatics Instructors:

DECD instructors are not teachers and are employed to provide swimming or aquatics instruction where they have the appropriate activity accreditation, first aid, criminal history screening and responding to abuse and neglect training.

Their role does not include responsibility for change room supervision. This is part of the supervisory responsibility of the school staff. They are not, and cannot be responsible for change room supervision as it is not part of their role.

What can the DECD Instructor in Charge do in support:

- 1 Liaise with Centre management about change room options and policies to provide schools with information about changing and use of change rooms to aid school decision making.
- 2 The DECD Instructor in Charge may be able to support schools in liaison with the centre management about changing options. They cannot and will not direct schools to manage changing in a certain way or be involved in the management of the changing of students.
- 3 Ensure that the change rooms are regularly checked for any safety issues and report in writing to centre management any issues that may be identified.
- 4 Inform schools of any issues related to change rooms so they can make decisions to ensure the safety of their students in the use of change rooms.
- 5 Ensure that Instructors understand policies related to the use of change rooms including their use of change rooms

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Identification of all persons involved in the program:

- 1 All DECD instructors should be wearing the DECD Swimming & Aquatics uniform and be easily identifiable.
- 2 Teachers should be easily identified (eg by the wearing of distinctive vest or sash or badge)
- 3 It is appropriate for parents accompanying the school to be identifiable, especially where members of the general public are present. Parents attend under the auspices of the schools and remain the responsibility of the school while present. Schools need to consider how they support their parents and ensure any concerns they may have are raised with school staff in the first instance and not directly with the DECD instructors.

Appendices:

- Child protection in Schools, Early Childhood Education and Care Services
(https://www.decd.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/child_protection_in_schools_early_childhood_education_and_care_policy.pdf)
- Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people - Guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings
(<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ProtectivePracticesforSta.pdf>)

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